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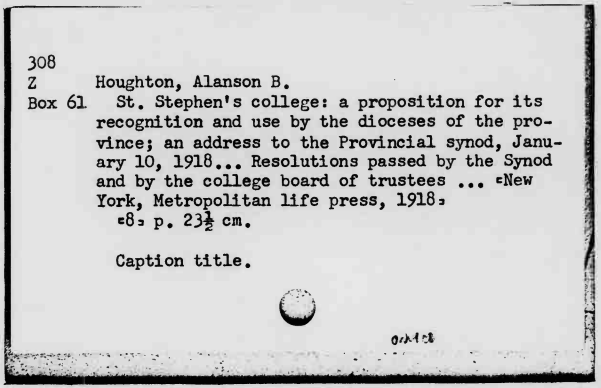

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FEB 18 1918

St. Stephen's College

A Proposition For Its Recognition and Use by the Dioceses of the Province.

AN ADDRESS

To the Provincial Synod, January 10, 1918

BY

ALANSON B. HOUGHTON

Delegate from Western New York

RESOLUTIONS

Passed by the Synod and by the College Board of Trustees

There are times, I suppose, gentlemen, when each one of you has wished he had the tongue of an Angel. I confess I could make use of one to some advantage myself for a few minutes this morning. For I want to make a suggestion to you in regard to a possible use of St. Stephen's College, and I have grave doubts of my ability to put it before you as justly and fairly and effectively as I would like. At any rate, let me hope you know more about the institution than I did a year ago when asked to become a Trustee. I had heard of St. Stephen's, of course. But as I had the place in mind, it was a shabby sort of college, somewhere up the river, dying slowly, but with gratifying certainty, because of its inability to conform to modern standards of education—a place where strange and obscure and mysterious religious rites were practiced and taught—a place it was wise to pass quickly lest the President dart out from behind a tree and fasten a degree upon you before you could get away. That, I say, roughly, was my notion of the institution, and, from what I have heard from time to time, I have a suspicion that pretty much the same notion is more or less widespread. When I went to Annandale, however, and looked the college over, I found the reality very different. I found a noble site—one of the most beautiful, perhaps, in the country; I found an entirely adequate set of buildings; I found a high standard of work—a competent faculty—a distinctly promising lot of students, and I found over and about and around the place a Church atmosphere—not

extreme at all, but sane and beautiful. There was nothing shabby—nothing false—nothing amateurish about the place. On the contrary, there was dignity and competency and a proper reserve. I found poverty, of course. I found a need so bitter that it could be met, as it was met, only by personal sacrifice. And my first impression, which has been strengthened by further observation and study, was a sense of wonder that pretty much no one in authority or out was lifting a hand to save the institution literally from starving to death. I came to understand the situation a little more clearly when I was made one of a committee to secure money for the college's more pressing needs. This committee went to various cities. It interviewed various "malefactors of great wealth." Some were interested. Some were not. But the moment any of those we approached took the matter under advisement and made an investigation, then, as some of them were good enough to tell us, it became evident that although St. Stephen's was nominally a Church college, the Church had practically ignored or repudiated her, and, of course, the moment this fact became known, money could not be had. So that the conclusion was quickly forced upon us that if the institution was to be saved at all, the Church must first, in some official way, give it recognition and endorsement. No middle ground seemed possible.

Now the Church, as you know, has many burdens and many calls upon Her. One must have good reason who comes to Her to-day to ask support for any cause. These are not days when money may be carelessly expended. But there are certain reasons, it seems to me, why St. Stephen's is entitled to look to the Church for the recognition it so desperately needs. One practical reason, to put the matter plainly, is that the plant—the grounds and buildings—is altogether too valuable an asset to the Church to be thrown away. I have a horror of waste myself. That, I dare say, is because I am a manufacturer. And not to make use, and full use, of these facilities seems to me almost a crime. There are only two other purely Church colleges to-day in the country. There is none other in this Province. And I find it hard, as a business proposition, to understand how we can afford to neglect the splendid possibilities that center about this institution. A better reason, however, is that St. Stephen's has been loyal to the Church. During its sixty years of existence, some five hundred clergymen have received their education and inspiration there. To-day, nearly four hundred men in Holy Orders owe to St. Stephen's their pre-seminary training. Surely that is a record of actual accomplishment. But, even more, gentlemen, it is a promise and a pledge for the future. To-day, as in the past, the spirit of the Church is dominating the college and its work, and education there is going hand in hand with religion. Whatever may have been the tendency elsewhere, religion at St. Stephen's has never been regarded as a negligible factor in education. Nor has it been permitted to make the intellectual training there either soft or narrow or cramped. Dr. FINLEY, Commissioner of Education of the State of New York, bears evidence to the "soundness of the course of study, the thoroughness of the instruction and the high morale of the student body." To be sure, St. Stephen's makes no pretense to teach every branch and kind of learning. It does not aim, for instance, to be a school of technology. It undertakes to give, and it does give, a sound classical education of the old-fashioned sort. And I venture to think that few of you here will undervalue an education of that particular kind. And one other reason I want to bring before you is that, because of its history and tradition and environment, poor men can, and do, go there and live on equal terms with their more well-to-do fellows without a sense of social inferiority. There is no luxury at St. Stephen's—no waste—no extravagance of living. The essentials are there. That is all. But there, also, are the joy and happiness of honest work and achievement. St. Stephen's has no desire to change this. It has set a standard for itself. And to whatever stature it may grow, it will, I believe, continue to be an institution of plain living and high thinking. I mention these reasons because, in justice to the college, it seems to me, they should be urged. I mention them also because I want to leave with you my own conclusion, which any of you can verify by a personal visit, that we have here in this Province an institution of learning of which we have no need to be ashamed—small, it is true, but really efficient—a college, in a word, to which your son or mine may go with quite as much self-respect and confidence as he would go to any of our larger colleges. For the purpose I have in mind to-day, however, such reasons are merely subsidiary. If I ask your formal recognition and support of St. Stephen's, it is because I have come to believe that St. Stephen's can perform a certain duty better,

perhaps, on the whole, than any other institution now available —a duty which has to do with a boy we often forget.

The Church has recently raised a great pension fund. It was a great accomplishment. It had constructive imagination behind it. But it left untouched the fact that, although the cost of living has risen tremendously in the past ten years, clergymen's salaries have not risen in the same proportion, if, indeed, they have risen, on the average, at all. Some, I know personally, are less. Now, one of the uses of a clergyman's salary is the education of his children. And, sometimes, as you know, it proves inadequate. Here and there, in small country parishes, scattered through the States of New Jersey and New York, you will find a promising boy, the son of a clergyman, practically sentenced for life to remain in starved surroundings because no organized means exist to help him. Not always, of course. Some of these boys break through their environment and grow into places of power and importance. And with reason, for they come, gentlemen, of the best stock in the world. But others do not. And, I have been wondering just how far we, as a Church, have any responsibility towards these occasional boys who are worth helping, and who cannot help themselves? I do not propose to argue the question. I assume we must admit responsibility in some degree—if only on the ground that while the fathers of these boys are being paid for parochial work, the service rendered by them must be measured in larger terms—in terms of moral and spiritual betterment of our national life. And I think, also, we may perhaps agree together that we have not met that responsibility with reckless generosity. The failure touches us in many ways. Just now we are talking a great deal about our duty to America. We hang service flags over our altars. Let me give you a practical illustration of what we are doing to-day for America. Let me contrast two instances. Take, for instance, say, a Greek, who comes here to New York as an emigrant, who, living on a foreign standard, is able to save, who buys, say, a fruit stand, who marries, who has a son. That son is offered here, in this city, the very best primary and secondary education. He has the use and opportunity of free libraries, free lectures, free museums, free music. And when he is ready, he can, almost without expense to his father, go to college here in New York, and qualify himself, by education, at least, to play a part in our national life. The case is familiar enough. Take, on the other hand, a case not so evident. Take an American by birth and inheritance, who goes into Holy Orders, who is called to a small parish somewhere in rural New York or New Jersey, who depends entirely upon his salary, who marries and who has a son. That son, as he grows up, will get the educational advantages that village offers. He may even get the advantages of a high school if one is close at hand. But when the boy reaches the age of sixteen or eighteen years, you may find him a clerk in the village dry-goods store, or driving a butcher's cart. That is honorable enough. But, as a net result, America has, for certain purposes and kinds of life, lost an American, and in his place has put a Greek. We do not complain, of course, because the Greek is fortunate. We are glad. That is what America means. But, I ask again, was it necessary to lose that other boy—that American boy—the boy we have tacitly agreed to abandon because that boy's father, doing the Master's work, in some small isolated community, is unable to send him where the chance of a proper education can be had? Has that boy, I repeat, any claim on us? Has that boy's father any claim on us? I think, gentlemen, that we must answer yes. I think that we, who represent here to-day seven great Dioceses, must, in some degree, admit our responsibility. And I submit that the question to put before ourselves is how that claim and that responsibility may be safely met. We cannot afford to make what is merely difficult easy. For that is not helping—that is pauperizing. But we can safely act when we make the impossible possible. For then we really help. And we meet our duty squarely, I believe, and face to face, when we make an education possible for one of those boys when it was not possible before.

Now, I do not like to think of those boys and do nothing. Something should be done. And because I believe that St. Stephen's is in a position to do more that is essential for them, for less money, than any other institution now available, it has seemed to me not impossible to bring the two together. For, approximately, $450 a year, St. Stephen's can board and lodge one of those boys comfortably; can, in a Churchly environment and atmosphere, give him a sound classical education; and, can,

at the same time, make him feel he is a man and not a pauper. Does such a sum of money seem to you excessive for such a purpose? I confess, gentlemen, it does not seem so to me. And so I am going to suggest to you that this Synod recommend the establishment, in each of the Dioceses of the Province, of a series of St. Stephen's Scholarships, whereby each year, each Diocese shall, on the nomination of the Bishop, send one of these forgotten boys to St. Stephen's. That would mean, beginning the first year with an expenditure of $450, an annual expense in four years and thereafter of $1,800 for each Diocese. St. Stephen's, for its part, will agree, just as soon as conditions become practicable, to endeavor faithfully to build up its endowment to a point where these scholarships may, quite possibly, cease to be a Diocesan expense at all. With such recognition, and for such a purpose, I believe the money can be had. There may be some reason which makes the plan either impracticable or impossible. You may see some objection which I have not seen. In fact, about all I do see is the fact that some of these boys need help, and that we can, if we will, make use of St. Stephen's wisely, I think, and most economically, to give them what they need most—an education. In any event, I am sure your decision, whatever it may be, will be based on a sympathetic knowledge of the bitter need, both of these boys and of the college. I, therefore, offer the following resolution: (The first of the resolutions following.)

Resolutions Adopted

AT MEETING OF

SYNOD OF PROVINCE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

July 10, 1917

Resolved, That this Synod recommend the immediate establishment in each Diocese of this Province of a series of scholarships, to be known as the St. Stephen's Scholarships of said Diocese, one of which shall be awarded annually for a term of four years, on the nomination of the Bishop, to the son of a clergyman, then canonically resident in said Diocese; and,

That each of said scholarships shall carry with it a grant of $450 per year, which sum shall be used to defray the cost of one year's board, lodging and tuition of the holder of said scholarship at St. Stephen's College; and,

That all such sum or sums shall be included in the annual budget of each Diocese as an ordinary expense; and further,

That each Diocese shall be represented on the Board of Trustees of St. Stephen's College by at least one member, who shall be nominated by the Bishop of that Diocese.

Resolutions Subsequently Adopted

Resolved, That the Synod commend to the Dioceses of the Province and also to the Church at large, St. Stephen's College at Annandale-on-Hudson, as an institution of religion and learning that stands for classical education of the highest order, and as a college of that character which can give to young men, sons of clergymen, and others, a classical training not surpassed by any other college in the country.

Resolved, That the Provincial Commission of Religious Education be directed to organize a Committee consisting of representatives of each Diocese in the Province to take such action as will make possible the presentation of the resolution of Mr. HOUGHTON regarding St. Stephen's College to each Diocesan Convention in the Province to the end that St. Stephen's College may receive the scholarships according to the Resolution;

Resolved, That such Committee is hereby instructed to suggest some plan to the next meeting of the Synod by which St. Stephen's College may become an authorized Church institution, and that the Committee be instructed to consider among other things some plan by which the Synod may be represented on the Board of Trustees of St. Stephen's College.

Resolutions Adopted by the Board of Trustees of St. Stephen's College, January 11, 1918

Whereas, Certain resolutions were passed at the meeting of the Synod of New York and New Jersey on January 10th, 1918, of which copies have been laid before this meeting; therefore

Resolved, That a Committee of the Board of Trustees be appointed by the President to meet with the Committee appointed by the Synod to formulate a plan whereby representation of the Synod on the Board of Trustees of St. Stephen's College may be accomplished; and,

Resolved, That the Board heartily endorses the plan as outlined in the resolutions passed.

Resolved, That the Trustees of St. Stephen's College, in case of the adoption by the Dioceses of the scholarship plan proposed, will as soon as conditions become practicable endeavor faithfully so to increase and build up the Endowment Fund that the cost of the scholarships to the Dioceses may be reduced to a minimum.

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